



## Making a difference in the lives of Ellensburg families

When Washington Service Corps members Samantha Novak and Jenny Blue started their terms of service with HopeSource in Ellensburg, they were told that they would experience some pretty grim situations.

But they were ill-prepared for the living situation they encountered just a few months into their service performing home-weatherization services.

The home was a 470-square-foot single-wide mobile home built in 1962. Nine people lived there, six of whom were children. Two were under age 6. “Jenny and I were immediately uncomfortable and disheartened with what we saw,” said Samantha. “It was obvious that the home was an immediate deferral because of the safety concerns.”

A deferral means that HopeSource cannot immediately help because of safety concerns, and members refer the homeowner to other agencies. In this case, the home had exposed electrical wiring, holes in the walls, mold and moisture on the window panes and the furnace was broken. The family had been using propane stove burners for warmth, putting them all in danger of a house fire and carbon monoxide poisoning.

Samantha and Jenny left the home with their heads down, almost speechless with disappointment and concern. They knew that HopeSource couldn't help, but they decided they had to help this family.

With fresh determination, Samantha and Jenny worked with two other departments to process the family's applications with urgency. The Energy Department fixed the furnace, and the Housing Department helped the daughter and her children move into an apartment. The rest of the family is now safe from immediate danger and staying warm for the winter.



*Samantha Novak (left) and Jenny Blue (right)*

**“For the first time, we understood the extreme hardships that people endure every single day, and the complete naivety throughout this nation,” said Samantha. “This case allowed us to be proud of the work we are doing and the service we are giving to our community.”**

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